areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire noted for their production of melanic forms of many species. What has been the relative incidence of the two forms of *corylata* there? Has the complete banded form reached 75% in some of these industrial areas of the Midlands or North? Finally, in parts of the Highlands of Scotland a third form, I believe usually infrequently, appears; this is ab. *albocrenata* Curtis, paler still, having the central band virtually absent; does it ever occur more commonly than 1% or 2% of the total population?

– B.K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

Eucosma metzneriana Treitsche (Lep.: Tortricidae) in north Essex

It seems worth placing on record the capture of a male *Eucosma metzneriana* Tr., which came to a Robinson pattern m.v. light-trap at the Essex Wildlife Trust's Rushey Mead Nature Reserve, North Essex, at around 22.30 hours on 28th June 1994. This appears to be only the fourth British example of this attractive grey moth, and the first record of a male.

The species was added to the British list at the Gog Magog Hills, Cambridgeshire (a chalkland site some 34 kilometres north of Rushey Mead) on 22nd July 1977 by R.J. Revell, when a single female in good condition came to light (*Ent. Rec.* **89**: 329-330, Plate 1). A second (worn) female was recorded at Southsea, South Hampshire by John Langmaid on 21st June 1982 (*Ent. Rec.* **94**: 202) and a third (condition not recorded) at Rye Harbour, East Sussex, by Mark Parsons on 14th July 1989 (*Ent. Rec.* **101**: 254). The Rushey Mead example was in good condition, apart from the symmetrical absence of the tornal region of both forewings, suggesting that the insect had perhaps been pecked at by a bird or other predator.

The exact status of this species in Britain is unclear, and evidence may suggest that it occurs solely as an immigrant. The two south coast records perhaps fit this pattern quite well, though neither Gog Magog Hills nor the Rushey Mead Nature Reserve are areas noted for their immigration of Lepidoptera and there was certainly no migrant activity at all in the latter area around 28th June 1994 (three Robinson traps which run nightly at different nearby gardens within two kilometres failed to detect a single immigrant moth a fortnight either side of the capture date).

In continental Europe, the larva feeds from August to May in the tip of a shoot of an *Artemisia* plant, causing the shoot to abort and resulting in a swelling which is distinctive. The larva then leaves the swelling and pupates, spun-up in the lower part of the stem (Bradley *et al,* 1979 *British Tortricoid Moths* **2**: 185-186. London: Ray Society) or in the larval habitation (Emmet, 1991 in *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* **7**(2): 158-159. Colchester: Harley Books). Both *Artemisia absinthium* and *A. vulgare* are recorded. Because of a variety of circumstances, (the most notable being the presence on the trip of my own two larvae and *au pair*!), the trap at Rushey Mead was set during the particular night in question adjacent to the entrance

gate in an area where the car may be safely parked. This area is blessed with a reasonable quantity of thinly scattered plants of *A. vulgare*. Though the site has been well worked by myself and colleagues in the last two years, careful examination of my diaries indicates that we have never before operated in the "mugwort zone", even though we have trapped on nine occasions during 1993 and 1994 between 21st June and 22nd July – the first and last recorded dates for the species in Britain. The possibility that the species is an extremely local resident should not be overlooked though subsequent searching for swollen tips of foodplant has proved fruitless to date.

I should like to thank the Essex Wildlife Trust for permission to record invertebrates at their Rushey Mead Nature Reserve and the reserve's Warden, Colin Taylor, for his enthusiastic help and assistance on site. It should be added that a permit is required to collect insects at all Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserves.– Colin W. Plant, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3QP.

Amphipoea fucosa paludis Tutt (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Oxfordshire

Three specimens of the Saltern Ear, *Amphipoea fucosa paludis,* were collected from mercury vapour traps in a garden at Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire, the first on 31st July 1990, another on 20th August 1992 and the third on 30th July 1994. Their identity was confirmed by examination of the genitalia. Evidently these are the first records of this species for Oxfordshire. The moth is normally associated with coastal areas, especially salt marshes, where it can be common, and its occurrence so far inland is remarkable unless, of course, it has been overlooked and mistaken for *A. oculea* (L.) which, in the event, is rare at the Long Wittenham site, with only one record since trapping began in July 1989. Possibly the moth has extended its range up the River Thames (which passes within 500 metres of the garden), as has the Brown-tail, *Euproctis chrysorrhoea* (L.) (Lymantriidae), another mainly coastal species regularly recorded at the same site.– Denis F. Owen and Martin Townsend, 42 Little Wittenham Road, Long Wittingham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4QS.

The first light trap, 1st century AD

I was interested to read Brian Gardiner's account of a 16th century description of a light trap to catch wax moths (*Ent. Rec. J. Var.* **107**: 45-46). The passage he quotes is in fact a fairly faithful translation from the Roman author Columella's treatise on agriculture written in AD60-65 (*De Re Rustica* IX.14.9). Columella does not claim to be the inventor of the technique in question, although he is the earliest surviving author to mention it, closely followed by his contemporary Pliny (*Natural History* XXI.81). Wax moths were well known to the bee-keepers of the ancient world and are described by a number of Greek and Latin authors, as discussed in my *Insects and other invertebrates in classical antiquity*, Exeter, 1988.
– Ian C. Beavis, 104 St. James' Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.